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A Brief History of the Dingle School  
by  
Howard S. Patterson

**A Brief History of the Dingle School**  
**(School Section Number 11, Township of Albion).**

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**An Essay Submitted in Conformity with the**  
**Requirements for Unit 102 of the**  
**Course Leading to the Degree of**  
**Bachelor of Education**

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION



The picture above is printed from a woodcut entitled "The Dingle School" by Miss Rosemary Kilbourn. The school is now being used by the artist as a studio.

It is the author's purpose in this brief essay to trace the history of the school from its earliest inception to the present. It represents a story similar to that of many other rural schools throughout Ontario.

Much of the information in this essay has been obtained from original documents located in the school when it was closed in the year 1950. Old school registers, minute books and account books when interpreted and fitted into the general history of education give us a fairly clear picture of the development of education in this small isolated school.

CHAPTER IIEarly History

The history of the Dingle School actually dates from the year 1872 when the present structure was built. However, since the area included in School Section No. 11 was settled much earlier than this date, it is necessary to study the early educational efforts in order to obtain a comprehensive picture.

Albion Township was rather slow in receiving settlers. The Township was not surveyed until the year 1818<sup>(1)</sup> and did not receive the benefit of the enlightened educational views of the early United Empire Loyalists. Evidence indicates however, that the early settlers were interested in educating their children since a private school was in operation in the area as early as 1835. It was located on the west half of Lot 36 on the first line of Albion and was operated by Francis Minnaugh who had trained in Ireland as a Roman Catholic Priest. Apparently his plans were somewhat changed when he married and emigrated to Canada. Being well educated he was qualified to teach the children in the area.

The author was fortunate in seeing a page from a ciphering book used by an ancestor of a local resident who had attended Mr. Minnaugh's school. The page was neatly written and showed rules regarding the solution of arithmetic problems with accompanying examples. The methodology used in teaching arithmetic at that time is well illustrated by this sample page.

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(1) Esther Heyes, "The Story of Albion", Bolton: The Bolton Enterprise, 1961. Preface.





Fig.I. Location map of the Dingle School. School Section No.11 is enclosed by red lines.



Phillips reports that "The method was to have rules copied and memorized and to have examples worked out, corrected, and copied. There was little explanation at any stage, and no teaching by inductive methods."<sup>(1)</sup>

A local cemetery, badly overgrown by trees and shrubs, contains the burial plot of the Mimnaugh family which at one time lived in the Parish of Langfield, County of Tyrone in Ireland.

A study of the reports of the Local Superintendents for Albion Township between the years 1850 and 1870<sup>(2)</sup> provide an excellent source of information regarding school conditions during that period. Three different reports variously estimate the date when the first common school was opened in the area as 1838, 1839 and 1842. No information regarding the location of this school is available.

The Local Superintendent's report of 1850 indicates that a log school was in operation in the school section. The school was twenty-four feet long, twenty-two feet wide and was in poor repair. Twenty-five children attended during the six months when it was open for classes. An itemized account indicating the sources of revenue to cover expenses, shows that approximately equal amounts were received from the legislative school grants, municipal grants and rate-bills. The annual salary of the teacher was forty-four pounds without board. The textbooks in use at that time were Lenie's Grammar,

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(1) Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada, p.144. Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company, 1957.

(2) Reports of the Local Superintendents for Albion Township, Ontario Government Archives.

Walkingame's, Tutor's Assistant, and the National Readers.

No school was in operation during part of 1850 and all of 1851, but in 1852 sixty-six pupils attended a log school which had no desks, no playground and no privy. Apparently the over-crowded conditions necessitated the construction of a new log school in 1852. This school was built on the same property as the present school but on a different site. Tremaine's map of the County of Peel (1859) shows a school located on the westerly half of Lot 33, second concession of Albion Township. This new school was reported as being in good repair and having a playground and a privy.

It is interesting to note that the property on which the school was built was originally Clergy Reserve Land. The hundred-acre farm was purchased by Edward Stinson for the sum of fifty pounds in the year 1849. A study of the original deed indicates that the document was signed in Lord Elgin's own handwriting.

Apparently Mr. Stinson allowed the trustees to build the school on the corner of his farm without remuneration, since no record of the transfer of property to the school board occurred until twenty years later. A deed in the Brampton Registry Office dated February 9, 1872, records the transfer of property from William Stinson (probably Edward Stinson's son) to the Trustees of the Common School Section number 11, for the sum of twenty dollars. The limits of the property were measured in chains and links and the area contained two roods of land. This is the property on which both the log school and the present school was built.



Between the years 1852 and 1870 the reports of the Local Superintendents record some rather valuable information. The teachers' salaries increased during this period from forty-two pounds to \$220.00. Attendance increased from thirty-six to seventy-two pupils. Rate-bills were abandoned in 1856 long before compulsory local taxation was introduced. Library books began to appear on the shelves of the little log school in 1857 when the Superintendent reported that one hundred volumes had been purchased. This represents quite an achievement for a small rural school.

One other item is worthy of mention. The local superintendents, who were usually highly respected members of the community, received five dollars from each school section for inspecting the schools and reporting conditions to the central authority. Since only thirteen school sections existed in Albion Township, the Superintendent received a total of \$65.00 for all his labours.

As mentioned previously, 1872 marks the beginning of the present Dingle School. A study of the School Law Improvement Act of 1871 soon reveals the reason for the erection of a new school house in that particular year. According to the Act, the Trustees,

"shall provide adequate accommodations for all the children of school age (i.e.-between the ages of five and twenty-one years, resident) in their school division.

"These accommodations to be adequate should include:

- (1) A site of an acre in extent but not less than half an acre.
- (2) A school house (with separate rooms, where the number of pupils exceeds fifty) the walls of which should be not less than ten feet high in the clear.



- (3) A sufficient fence or paling round the school premises.
- (4) A play-ground, or other satisfactory provision for physical exercise, within the fences and off the road.
- (5) A well or other means of procuring water for the school.
- (6) Proper and separate offices for both sexes..." (1)

It is unlikely that the old log school could provide these requirements since seventy-two pupils were crowded into the school in 1870 when Robert Kidney was the teacher. Apparently the trustees had to scurry around, purchase the necessary property, arrange for the building of a new school, and fulfil the various requirements laid down by the new law.

Very little information regarding the Dingle School is available for the years 1872 to 1897; registers and record books have apparently disappeared.

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(1) Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario, 1871, pp.54-55.

### CHAPTER III

#### The Dingle School between 1897 and 1910.

A study of record books and registers indicate that teachers at the turn of the century were rather poorly paid and difficult to retain. Between 1900 and 1910 no fewer than fourteen different teachers taught at the Dingle School. During one five-month period, three different names appeared on the register.

Salaries ranged from approximately \$280.00 per year in 1897 to a high of \$400.00 in 1907. Early in the twentieth century, teachers who remained for the full year, which corresponded to the calendar year, were paid only once. In speaking to Mr. E. Jackson who taught in this school in 1906, I learned that teachers in those days had many creditors. The household with which the teacher boarded often had to wait until December in order to get paid. In 1907, Miss Edith Armstrong was paid in three instalments. This was the first indication of such procedure.

Three trustees and a secretary-treasurer were responsible for administering the business of the school. A new trustee was appointed each year and two were retained in order to provide experience on the board. An annual meeting was held late in December of each year. Residents in the area remember that some of these meetings were rather lively and well-attended especially if a controversial issue was to be discussed. The records show that in 1910 it was necessary to refer an issue to arbitration. One can only guess at the reason but the fact that a new teacher was soon hired might



suggest the cause of controversy.

A study of the minutes of the school meeting for December 29th, 1897 (fig.2) indicates that the business transacted at the annual meeting consisted mainly of appointing a new trustee and 'letting' the contract for supplying the school with wood. It is quite likely that between annual meetings much of the required business was transacted by the secretary-treasurer.

It is interesting to note that money often had to be borrowed throughout the year to pay necessary expenses. The legislative grant which was received in July was usually turned over to the teacher and local taxes were not received until the middle of December. Interest rates of 5 and 6% were common and money was borrowed from local residents.

Some of the former teachers who were interviewed for this report can recall that slates were still commonly used during the early part of the twentieth century. Apparently these slates gave the classroom a very distinctive odour since the common practice for cleaning (when the teacher wasn't looking) was to use saliva to wet the slates and a coat or shirt sleeve for wiping purposes. Ink and foolscap were purchased but were used only by senior pupils or on special occasions. Straight pens and nibs were mainly used for writing.

Albion December 21st 1897

Annual School Meeting of S. S. No. 11 Albion

Moved and Seconded that Albert Stinson act as Chairman  
Carried

Moved and Seconded that W. J. Stinson act as Secretary  
Carried

Moved and Seconded that the Auditors report be adopted  
Carried

The contract for supplying the school with 10 cords  
of hardwood green beech and maple 22 inches long 4 1/2 inches square

Moved and Second that Gilbert McDonald act as trustee  
for the coming term . Carried

Moved and Seconded that Albert Stinson  
act as Section auditor . Carried

Albert Stinson

Chairman



Pupils in those days were required to purchase their own textbooks and necessary supplies. Records indicate that in 1898 the school board purchased a large map of the County of Peel, a box of chalk, a bottle of ink, and a few blackboard brushes (fig.3). It is impossible to imagine how the teacher could manage with such meagre supplies.

Attendance seems to have been quite good despite the isolation of the school and the long distances travelled by most children. Twenty-four names appeared on the roll in January of 1901. This number was increased to thirty-five in April of the same year. Most of the new pupils admitted were younger and probably started school when the weather improved. Some teachers were kind enough to keep a record of weather conditions in their registers. Attendance was usually poor on rainy days but only serious snow storms kept the pupils away from school.

Prior to 1904 the course of study to be followed was printed on the back of the registers (fig.4). The suggested outline was rather sketchy and allowed the teacher a great deal of latitude in the choice of material to be taught.

In 1904 a new course of study appeared which according to R.A. Pyne, Minister of Education, ".....is set forth with a large amount of detail, and will as a consequence be very useful to teachers" <sup>(1)</sup>. The major changes involved a

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(1) Report of the Minister of Education, Province of Ontario, Part 1, 1904, p. XVIII.

# School Section New Albion Expenditure for 1898

		\$	cts
Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> by	Postage on school meeting report 3 <sup>cts</sup>		3
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> ..	Paid John Patterson for 10 cords of wood \$3.50 per cord	35	00
.. by	Insurance on school \$1.40 postage 8 <sup>cts</sup>	1	48
April 1 <sup>st</sup> ..	paid one dollar and twenty five cents for cleaning school	1	25
April 1 <sup>st</sup> ..	one bottle of ink 45 <sup>cts</sup> black board brushes <sup>one box of chalk 15<sup>cts</sup></sup> 16 <sup>cts</sup> exercise book <sup>25<sup>cts</sup></sup>	1	01
May 1 <sup>st</sup> ..	one sucker for school pump 75 <sup>cts</sup>		75
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> ..	Postage on L. Grant 11 cents		11
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> ..	paid Twenty two dollars L. Grant to Teacher	22	00
Sept 4 <sup>th</sup> ..	Three pairs of glass for school 20 <sup>cts</sup>		20
Sept 8 <sup>th</sup> ..	Postage on order for school money 3		03
Sept 9 <sup>th</sup> ..	map of the County of Peel \$2.50	2	50
Sept 29 <sup>th</sup> ..	one box of chalk 15 <sup>cts</sup>		15
Dec 15 <sup>th</sup> ..	paid Teacher \$2.78	278	00
Dec 15 <sup>th</sup> ..	paid Archie stinson \$57.75 borrowed money	57	75
	for note with Int. @ 5%		
Dec 15 <sup>th</sup> ..	Paid Sec. Treas. \$2.00		00
	Total Expenditures	382	26
	Cash on hand	28	11
		410	37

Fig. 3. Record of expenditures for the year 1898.



Fig. 4- (opposite)- Program of Studies for Public Schools  
(1903).

# PROGRAMME OF STUDIES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The programme of studies herein prescribed shall be followed by the teacher as far as the circumstances of his school permit. Any modifications deemed necessary should be made only with the concurrence of the Inspector and the trustees. In French and German schools the *supplemental Readers* shall be used in addition to any text-book in either of the languages aforesaid.

SUBJECT.	1st FORM.	2nd FORM.	3rd FORM.	4th FORM.	5th FORM.
READING—	The use of the Tablets and Parts I. and II. of the First Reader.	The Second Reader; easy questions on the literature of every lesson.	The Third Reader; literature of every lesson.	The Fourth Reader; the literature of every lesson.	Practice in oral reading continued.
SPELLING AND WRITING—	Spelling from dictation and orally. Writing from blackboard copies.	Oral spelling and dictation on slates and paper; blackboard exercises; copy books Nos 1 and 2.	Course in Form II continued; copy books Nos. 3 and 4.	Systematic orthography and copy books Nos. 5 and 6.	
GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION—			Classes of words and their inflections; simple analysis; descriptive and letter writing.	Elements of formal grammar, analysis and composition; Descriptive, narrative and letter writing.	Etymology and Syntax including the inflection, classification, and elementary analysis of words and the logical structure of the sentence; rhetorical structure of the sentence and paragraph; exercises chiefly on passages from authors not prescribed. Essays on familiar subjects; familiar letters.
ENGLISH POETICAL LITERATURE— ENGLISH LANGUAGE—	Oral exercises in language; correction of mistakes in conversation.	Oral and written exercises in language and composition; correction of mistakes in conversation.			Intelligent and appreciative comprehension of the prescribed texts; memorization of the finest passages; supplementary reading from authors prescribed by the teacher; oral reading of the texts. The examination in literature will consist of "right work" as well as of questions on the prescribed texts.
HISTORY—			Conversation on British and Canadian history; local history.	Leading events in Canadian and British history, with special attention to Canadian history since 1841.	The History of Canada; British History.
GEOGRAPHY—	Conversation respecting the earth; its divisions of land and water; its plants and animals; explanation of any reference to places in the reading lessons.	Local geography and general geography; world geography; places referred to in reading lesson.	Definitions; general geography of the Dominion of Canada; North and South America; Ontario; more particularly; map drawing.	Geography of Canada and the British Empire; the continents; map drawing.	The building up of the earth; its land surface; the ocean; comparison of continents as to physical features, natural products and inhabitants; relations of physical conditions to animal and vegetable products, and of natural products and geographical condition to the occupations of the people and natural resources. Form, size and motion of the earth; lines drawn on the map, with reasons for their position; relations of the position of the earth with respect to the sun, to light and temperature; the air; its movements; causes affecting climate. Natural and manufactured products of the countries of the world, with their exports and imports; the continental commercial highways and their relation to centres of population; internal commercial highways of Canada and the chief internal commercial highways of the United States; commercial relations of Great Britain and her colonies. Forms of Government in the countries of the world and their relation to civilization.
ARITHMETIC AND ELEMENTARY MEASUREMENT—	Notation and numeration to 1,000; addition and subtraction; mental arithmetic.	Notation and numeration to 1,000,000; multiplication and division; mental arithmetic.	Reduction; compound rules; bills and accounts; averages and aggregates; sharing and measurements; mental arithmetic.	Measures, multiples, fractions, percentages, interest, mental arithmetic.	Proof of elementary rules in arithmetic; fractions (theory and practice); commercial arithmetic; mental arithmetic; measurement of rectilinear figures.
BOOKKEEPING—					Bookkeeping by single and double entry; commercial forms, such as drafts, notes and cheques; general business transactions. The bookkeeping shall be especially suitable for farmers and artisans or for retail merchants and general traders.
ALGEBRA—					Elementary rules; highest common measure; lowest common multiple; fractions begun.
GEOMETRY—					Euclid, Book I, propositions 1-26; easy deductions.
PHYSIOLOGY, TEMPERANCE AND AGRICULTURE—		Conversations on temperance; the use of alcoholic stimulants and the laws of health.	Conversations on temperance; the physical effects of intoxicating liquors; importance of exercise.	Digestion, respiration, the circulation of the blood, and the nervous system. The effects of alcohol and narcotics.	The course in the authorized text book, (Agriculture).
DRAWING—	The exercises in First Reader, and blackboard exercises.	Authorized Drawing Course Nos. 1 and 2.	Authorized Drawing Course Nos. 3 and 4.	Authorized Drawing Course Nos. 5 and 6.	Object and model drawing; High School Drawing Course, Books Nos. 1 and 2.
BOTANY—					The practical study of representatives of the following natural orders of flowering plants: Ranunculaceae, Cruciferae, Malvaceae, Leguminosae, Rosaceae, Sapindaceae, Umbelliferae, Compositae, Labiate, Cupuliferae, Araceae, Liliaceae, Iridaceae, Coniferae, and Gramineae (types contained in text-book). Drawing and description of plants and their classification. Comparison of different organs, morphology of root, stem leaves, and hairs, parts of flowers, germination, reproduction of flowering plants, pollination, fertilization, and the nature of fruits and seeds. In the examination a plant belonging to one of the above mentioned orders to be selected by the presiding examiner shall be submitted to the candidates for description and classification.
LATIN AND GREEK—					The Elementary Latin Book, Grammar, Composition and sight reading. The Beginner's Greek Book begun.
FRENCH AND GERMAN—					Grammar, Composition and sight reading.
MUSIC—	Note singing.	Note singing, continued; easy notation.	Easy exercises in musical notation; songs.	Course in Form IV continued.	



greater emphasis on nature study and art. History, which had previously been taught only in the third and fourth forms was now started in first form. Book-keeping, manual training and household science became optional subjects in the fourth form. It is very unlikely that these subjects were introduced in the Dingle School. A note in the back of an old register indicates that the teacher did not inaugurate manual training until the year 1938.

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CHAPTER IVRecent History of the Dingle School

Between the years 1910 and 1950 the most significant feature of the history of school section No. 11 was the steady decline in school population. In 1929 only fourteen children were attending the school. In 1944 seven names appeared on the register, and by June 1950, only three pupils were attending.

A number of factors have contributed to the above situation. Much of the land located in the school section is rather poor for farming purposes. The original settlers cleared their properties, ploughed up and down hills and around stones but managed to grow enough crops to provide a comfortable living. However, over a period of years, erosion had a damaging effect on the unprotected hillsides and much land reverted to pasture. As a result farmers needed more property than the original hundred acres and consolidation of farms occurred. This process tended to reduce the number of families in the section and thus reduced the number of children.

The advent of mechanized farming tended to reduce the amount of tillable land and further reduced the families in the school section.

In the early 1940's a number of city dwellers began recognizing the area as a potential retreat from the hectic city life. The scenic hills, numerous small streams and proximity to Toronto promoted the sale of land to many who





**Fig. 5- The Dingle School (1948). The surrounding hillsides are now completely reforested.**

used the area as a summer or week-end residence. This process further reduced the number of permanent residents in the section.

At a trustees' meeting held on September 5, 1950, it was decided that the Dingle School should be closed and that the children should be transported to the school at Mono Mills. In 1958, three school sections (including S.S. No. 11) united to form Caledon School Area No. one, and a new school was built at Mono Mills to accommodate the children in the area.

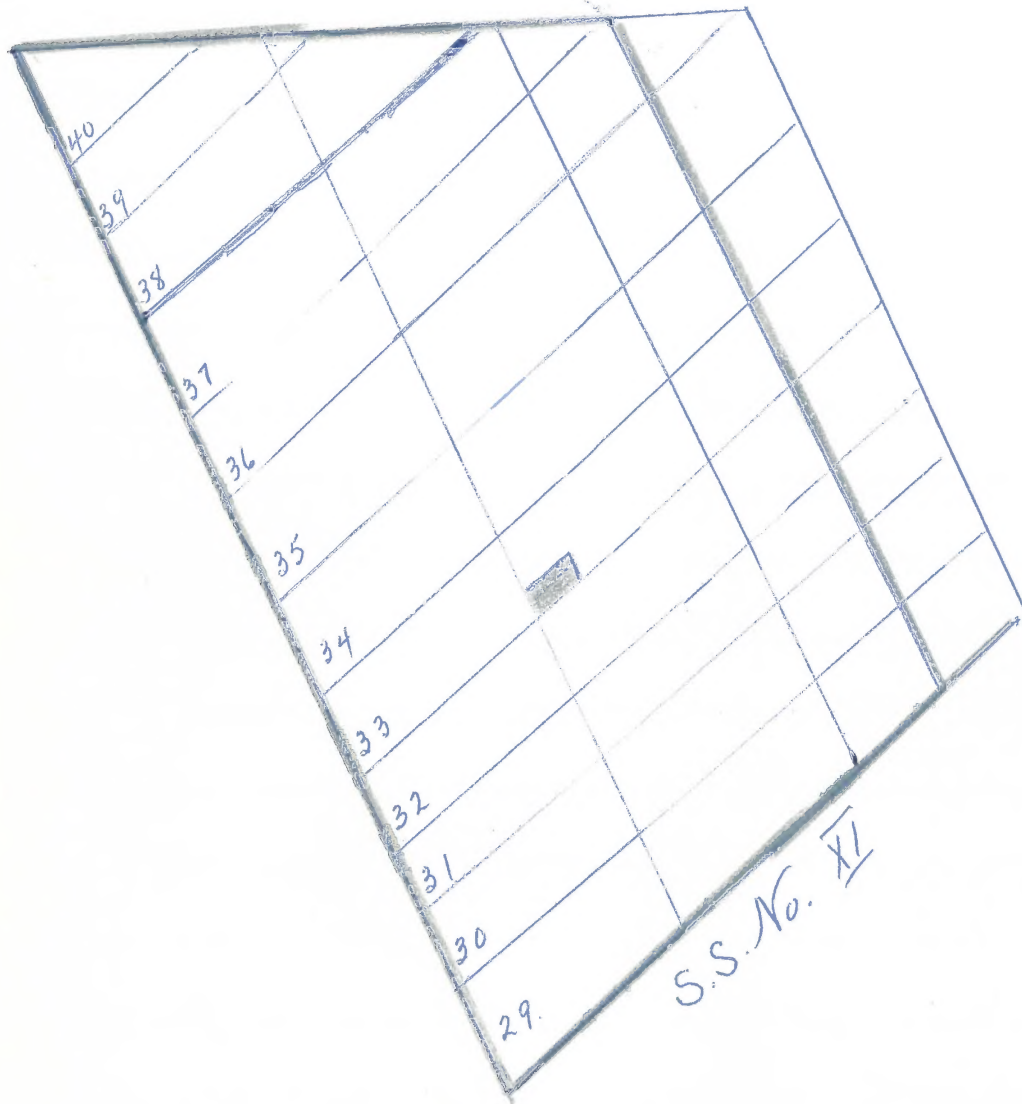
Recently the old Dingle School building and property was purchased by Miss Rosemary Kilbourn to be used as an artist's studio. The outside of the building still retains the appearance of the typical 'little red school-house' (fig.5) but many changes have occurred inside. A huge field-stone fireplace has replaced the pot-bellied stove which many of the former pupils remember so well. The interior has been converted to comfortable living quarters. Much of the surrounding countryside has been reforested and in years to come will very much resemble the landscape viewed by the first settlers in the area.

The Dingle School has served its purpose as an educational institution. It has fallen victim to modern trends in education. In a recent speech, Dr. F.S. Rivers, Chief Director of Education for Ontario, stated that only seven per cent of our children attend one-room rural schools at the present time. For this reason, I repeat that the story of the Dingle School is typical and is being repeated in thousands of communities throughout Ontario.



Copy of original found when making renovations  
in Dingle School by Rosemary Kilbourn

M. Patterson



Commenced at South West corner lot No 29  
in the First Con: then North to the townline  
to lot No 40, then East along the townline  
two 2 half con then South to the South  
East corner West half lot No 29, thence to  
place of beginning.

Adopted  
15<sup>th</sup> December 1885

Thomas Sevinarton  
Reeve of Albion